

UPPINGHAM

Attendance and punctuality policy

1. Introduction and Aims

Excellent attendance and punctuality are central to maximising the educational opportunities for Uppingham pupils. Improving attendance and punctuality is everyone's responsibility and is integral to our culture of learning at Uppingham. It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure registers are taken and to promote a culture where the importance of attendance and punctuality is understood. It is also important that we work with parents/carers to ensure that pupils can fully access their education.

The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. We understand that some pupils may find it harder to attend school than others and therefore we work with the pupils and parents/carers to ensure we can build a trusting relationship.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following other policies:

- Behaviour and Discipline Policy
- Missing Pupil Procedure

2. Safeguarding and attendance

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Children missing education (CME) are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of abuse, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life. A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect and therefore the school takes its responsibilities seriously in this matter.

The Assistant Head Pastoral (AHP) oversees attendance and punctuality data with the support of the Housemasters/Housemistresses (HsMs). The Assistant Head Pastoral is a member of the Pastoral Support Committee. The Designated Safeguarding Lead would also be involved in cases regarding concerns around attendance and external agency communications.

3. Registering and Recording Daily Attendance

While the Department for Education advice does not require the school to keep a daily attendance register for its boarding pupils, we are required to register all day pupils. Uppingham nonetheless takes a thorough approach to registering and recording attendance for all its pupils.

Attendance registers (*callovers*) for boarding pupils and day-in-boarding pupils are taken in boarding houses at several points in the day: namely breakfast, lunch and tea. Attendance registers for boarders and day-in-boarding pupils occur seven days a week. Additional attendance checks in boarding houses might also be taken at other times of the day, such as bedtimes and at weekends after 'lock-up'. These registers (*callovers*) are kept electronically.

Attendance registers for day pupils occur Monday to Saturday (i.e. on any day on which lessons take place). Morning registration takes place at 8.15am in the day House and at breakfast for day-in-boarders. Registration is completed by the tutor, matron or HsM. Afternoon registration takes place after lunch. Pupils staying late for prep on Monday to Friday are also registered by the member of staff on duty at 6pm.

All attendance/absence data is also placed onto our attendance system (in AIMS). Pupil attendance (boarders and day) is recorded at the start of the first session of the school day, before 8.50am, and at the start of the second session of the school day, before 2.30pm. (A 'school day' is a day in which lessons are taught i.e. not Sundays.) On each occasion it is recorded whether every pupil is present, attending an approved educational activity, or absent.

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The following coding is used to show the attendance information:

| CODE | DESCRIPTION |
|------|--|
| / | Present (AM) |
| \ | Present (PM) |
| # | School closed to pupils and staff |
| B | Attending any other approved educational activity |
| C | Other exceptional circumstances |
| C1 | Regulated performance or regulated employment abroad |
| C2 | Subject to a part-time timetable |
| D | Dual registered at another school |
| E | Excluded/External Rustication |
| G | Family holiday (not agreed) |
| I | Illness |
| J1 | Interview |
| K | Attending education provision arranged by local authority |
| L | Late (before registers closed) |
| M | Medical/dental appointments |
| N | No reason yet provided for absence |
| O | Other or unknown absence |
| P | Approved sporting activity |
| Q | Unable to attend school because of access arrangements |
| R | Religious observance |
| S | Study leave |
| T | Parent travelling for occupational purposes. |
| U | Late (after registers closed) |
| V | Educational visit or trip |
| W | Work experience |
| X | Non-compulsory school age absence |
| Y1 | Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available |
| Y2 | Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel |
| Y3 | Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed |
| Y4 | Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed. |
| Y5 | Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention |
| Y6 | Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law |
| Y7 | Unable to attend because of any unavoidable cause |
| Z | Pupil not on roll |
| - | No mark yet recorded |
| AA | Present (AM) Matron off games |
| AB | Present (PM) Matron off games |
| | |

Responsibility for recording this information on the attendance system lies with the House Pastoral Team.

4. Lesson Registration

In order to safeguard our pupils effectively, registration is expected in every lesson. The lesson register should be taken on AIMS (academic lessons) or SOCS (sport/co-curricular sessions) within 15 minutes of the lesson starting.

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5. Recording Absence from School

Any pupil (boarding, day-in-boarding or day) who is absent from school on a day on which lessons are held is recorded on AIMS. As part of this recording process a brief statement is provided as to why the pupil is absent. In addition, a code is placed into the relevant section on AIMS to record the reason why the pupil is absent.

This information is then available to all staff on the Absence and Off Games report on Report Server, enabling them to check that the absence of a child from their class or activity is legitimate.

Authorised Absence from School

'Authorised absence' means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

Unauthorised Absence from School

Unauthorised absence is recorded if the school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence. This may include a holiday not authorised by the Headmaster/Senior Deputy Head or absence without explanation. Where the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence, this will also be recorded as unauthorised.

6. Checking Pupil Absence

In almost all cases, parents readily provide the necessary information on reasons for absence or lateness before the school needs to make enquiries. However, the school will actively seek this information, where it is not immediately forthcoming.

Day and Day-in-boarding Pupils

Should a Day or Day-in-boarding Pupil not arrive for the start of school (either 8.15am registration in the day house or breakfast in the boarding house) and no information has been provided by parents, then either the Housemaster/Housemistress or matron must make contact with parents as soon possible. The aim should be that parents are contacted before the start of lessons. At this point the reason for absence can be checked and coded accordingly.

If parents cannot be contacted, or parents believe their son/daughter is in school, then the Missing Pupil Procedure should be followed. This policy is available to all staff on the UppNET Safeguarding Hub.

Attendance registers of Day and Day-in-boarding Pupils will be kept for seven years after the end of the year in question, or until pupil is 25. If registers are kept electronically a back-up copy must be made either electronically or as a printed version, not less than once a month.

Boarders

The nature of boarding means that, once a boarding pupil has returned to school, they usually will remain in school for as long as the school is in session. Therefore absence (and a need to check the reason for it) will only take place if:

- A pupil has not returned to school following an exeat or leave-out weekend.
- A pupil is missing.
- A pupil has gone home because of illness or other reason and has not returned.

If a pupil has failed to return from an official break at the time expected, parents should be immediately contacted to determine the reason. If parents cannot be contacted or believe their son/daughter is in school, then the Missing Pupil Procedure should be followed.

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Boarders' attendance in lessons, however, will be monitored in the same way as for day and day-in-boarding pupils. It is acknowledged that boarders may be 'in school' but may still be missing lessons for a myriad of reasons.

Callover registers will be kept for seven years after the end of the year in question, or until pupil is 25. If registers are kept electronically a back-up copy must be made either electronically or as a printed version, not less than once a month.

7. Monitoring pupil attendance and thresholds

Attendance – this applies to actual attendance in school (AM and PM sessions)

Attendance will be monitored by the Pastoral Leadership Team (comprising of the Senior Deputy Head, Assistant Head Pastoral and Assistant Head Safeguarding) working with the HsMs and matrons and in consultation with the Pastoral Support Committee. Pupil attendance will be monitored every three weeks.

Threshold 1: If attendance falls below 95% the tutor will contact parents/carers as a check in and to ensure there is no additional information, we need to be made aware of regarding the pattern of absence.

In addition, on the third day of consecutive absence the matron will alert the tutor to contact home to check-in pastorally and to see if there is anything we can do to support.

After three days of absence and not receiving information regarding an authorised reason to be missing school, the Pastoral Support Committee (PSC) would seek advice from Rutland Children's Social Care. The Pastoral Support Committee recognise children missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation.

Threshold 2: If attendance falls below 90%-85% the HsM will meet with parents/carers to explore the potential reasons for absence and to offer support if needed. Following this meeting a letter is sent from the pastoral office for recording purposes. The discussions of these meetings are logged on PIMS.

Threshold 3: If attendance falls below 80-85% the Assistant Head Pastoral will meet with parents/carers to discuss reasons for low attendance and offer support and discuss next steps. This is also added to our internal safeguarding database.

Threshold 4: If attendance falls below 80% the Pastoral Leadership Team (PLT) will decide what intervention, support or external guidance is needed, dependent on pupil and context/reason for absences and working with each identified pupil and their parents/carers and HsM to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance. Where out of school barriers are identified, the PLT will signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance. If the issue persists, the PLT will take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners and act as the lead practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best placed lead service. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, the PLT will continue to work with the local authority and partners.

The Headmaster may determine that the pattern of absence is incompatible with the attendance expectations of the school and require the pupil to leave the school.

These steps may be adapted as individual circumstances dictate.

8. Monitoring Pupil Absence and Safeguarding Responsibilities

The Assistant Head Pastoral, Housemasters/Housemistresses and matrons are at the forefront of monitoring any trends in absence and attendance. We acknowledge that sometimes a pupil's attendance may not reach one of the thresholds above, yet still be a concern.

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Should there be any cause for concern, this should be discussed with a member of the Pastoral Support Committee and appropriate action taken, involving external agencies when necessary.

Causes of concern may be:

- Absence for which explanations appear to be improbable or inaccurate.
- Long periods of absence (even with credible explanation) which may affect a pupil's ability to enjoy a successful school/ academic career.
- Regular absences from lessons and activities.
- An unexpected pattern of absence from what is considered a 'vulnerable group'. The Department for Education's Children missing in education statutory guidance suggests certain groups of children who may be at particular risk. These include pupils at risk of harm/ neglect, children of gypsy, Roma, traveller families, missing children/runaways, etc. In Uppingham's particular context, pupils might also be considered 'vulnerable' if:
 - They are currently or previously involved in a safeguarding/ child protection case.
 - There is a good reason to believe they may be a victim of crime.
 - They are, or ever have been, 'looked after' children.
 - They have known mental health concerns.
 - They are known to have a poor relationship with their families/ carers.
 - Parents/ family are known to have a history of domestic violence, mental health concerns or substance abuse.
 - There is a past concern about the child associating with significantly older people or pupils.
 - There are significant incidents which have occurred prior to the child's absence.
 - They might be the victim of bullying.
 - There are religious or cultural reasons which might suggest they are at risk from forced marriage or female genital mutilation.

Reporting absence to the Local Authority

If a pupil, whether day or boarding, is regularly absent from school or has missed five school days or more without permission, then the Housemaster/ Housemistress or matron must inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will contact Children's Social Care in Rutland and the Local Authority in which the pupil resides. Where the pupil is resident overseas, Rutland Children's Social Care will be contacted for advice.

9. Punctuality to school

This section mainly concerns day-in-boarding and day pupils. In exceptional circumstances it may be relevant to adapt this guidance for boarders who return late after holidays/leave outs.

Morning registration for day pupils is taken at 8.15am on a school day. If a pupil is not in registration they will be marked as N (no reason yet provided for absence) in the register.

Pupils that miss registration but arrive at school later in the day must be marked as late in the register. Lates should not be given if the parent/carer has given a reasonable reason and informed the tutor/house team.

If there are adverse weather conditions or transport issues that are causing widespread delays, then the Assistant Head Pastoral will advise tutors not to mark lateness for that particular morning.

Repeated lateness in a term will be responded to as follows:

- 1st** Restorative conversation (tutor)
- 2nd** Restorative conversation (HsM) and automated email home
- 3rd** School Detention
- 4th** HsM communication with parent/carer
- 5th** Punctuality workshop
- 6th** Assistant Head Pastoral communication with Parent/carer
Further lateness will then result in triggering the more severe sanction process (gating, rustication, etc.)

10. Parental and Carer Responsibility

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Parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly. This means that their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

Parents and carers must:

- Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies
- Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent or late (contact HsM and Matron in House).
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance by emailing the HsM.
- Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.
- Ensure their child is punctual each day.

Leave of absence in term-time (including late arrivals and early departures)

All pupils are expected to be in school during term time, and we would not expect to receive any requests for absence, in particular due to holiday or late arrival/early departure. Uppingham believes that it is detrimental to a pupil to miss any schooling at this crucial point in their education. There is no substitute for being taught in the classroom and absence can lead to pupils being disadvantaged in external examinations.

Any requests for leave of absence should be addressed to the relevant HsM to be considered whether it is authorised or not. The HsM will look at lesson attendance, previous absences and academic performance when considering if permission is to be granted and will consult with the Senior Deputy Head. If this would bring attendance below 95% in an academic year, permission will not usually be granted.

We expect parents to make appropriate travel arrangements, using guardians where necessary, to ensure that pupils do not miss school at the beginning or end of term.

Working together with pupils, parents and carers

As part of the attendance escalation process described in this policy, parents/carers will be informed of concerns over attendance at an early stage and the school will work with parents/carers to support the pupil in improving attendance.

This may involve interventions including, but not limited to:

- Pupil buddy/mentor
- Work report
- Adapted timetable
- Adapted start/end times to the day
- Academic support
- Regular attendance meetings
- Referral to children's social care (early help)

We will work with parents to help ensure that their child attends school and will listen and provide support wherever possible; however, persistent or severe absence will not be tolerated.

Any queries over a pupil's attendance should be addressed to the HsM in the first instance. Any further concerns should be addressed to the Assistant Head Pastoral.

11. Support for pupils with barriers to learning, including those with medical conditions.

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. As a school we will maintain the same ambition for attendance, as well as punctuality, and work with pupils and parents/carers to maximise attendance and punctuality where and when applicable. Regular monitoring of data for such groups will occur. That said, in working with their parents/carers to

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improve attendance, we are mindful of the barriers these pupils face and put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education.

Communication between the pastoral, learning support team and parents/carers will be key to ensuring transparent and open dialogue. Additional support and adjustments will be considered, discussed and implemented. Additional support from wider services and external partners will be considered (where applicable).

This could include:

- Having sensitive conversations and developing good support for pupils with physical or mental health conditions. For example, making reasonable adjustments where a pupil has a disability or putting in place an individual plan where needed; considering whether additional support from external partners would be appropriate, making referrals in a timely manner and working together with those services to deliver any subsequent support.
- Establishing strategies for removing the in-school barriers these pupils face, including considering support or reasonable adjustments for uniform, transport, routines, access to support in school and lunchtime arrangements.
- Ensuring joined up pastoral care is in place where needed and considering whether a time-limited phased return to school would be appropriate, for example for those affected by anxiety about school attendance.
- Ensuring data is regularly monitored for these groups at Pastoral and Safeguarding meetings.
- Pupils with long-term illnesses or other health needs may need additional support to continue their education. In all cases, the school should be sensitive and avoid stigmatising pupils and parents/carers. They should talk to pupils and parents/carers and understand how they feel and what they think would help improve their attendance to develop individual approaches that meet an individual pupil's specific needs.